South Main remains strong competitor ...

Continued from Page 3

CitiFinancial is in the business of giving personal loans ranging from $1,000 to $7,500 and home equity loans from $7,500 to $500,000.

Located in 12 countries, with more than 1,100 offices in the United States, CitiFinancial had an office in Fort Worth and was looking at moving west, "because that is where the people are moving," according to Gullion.

Visibility is important

Gullion said company officials took about a year and a half looking at demographics, and picking The Village shopping complex on South Main as its location was the easiest part.

"It has good visibility and is on the major thoroughfare and it is easy to tell someone how to get here," Gullion said. "I just tell them that it is three blocks south of the courthouse. This complex was one of the newer ones on South Main, it has a lot of frontage and parking areas. It just met the needs we had."

Though he competes with area banks for business, Gullion said he believes CitiFinancial can better serve the customer looking for a loan.

"Normally we are a lot faster than a bank," he said. "Depending on what your credit looks like and depending on what your profile looks like, you can give me a call and in 35 to 45 minutes later you can come in and sign some papers and walk out with a check. Most of your banks can't do that and the information we have stays here."

With three employees, Gullion said he hopes and believes the growth will continue for the community and the business.

"We live here and all of our business stays here in Weatherford," Gullion said.

A mix of new and old

From new to old, just across the streets sits one of South Main's longest existing businesses, Gibson's Discount Center, 411 S. Main St.

Gibson's co-owner Tommy Holladay moved his business to South Main from Fort Worth Highway after just one year of business, approximately 35 years ago.

"We found a bigger store and a better location," said Holladay on why the business moved from the 8,000-square-foot location to the 30,000-square-foot building it is currently in.

He said even if he could move the business to any other location in town, he would want to remain right where he is at.

"I do not know a place where it would be better," Holladay said. "If we had it to do over again we might have moved further out, but I don't think so."

With 35 employees, Gibson's does compete with Wal-Mart and other discount centers, but Holladay said the competition has not hurt.

"It would probably shock everybody, but we could not tell one way or the other when they (Wal-Mart) opened," he said. "In fact when they moved to the super center our business picked up quite a bit."

Holladay said many find the other stores as being too big and his customers tend to prefer the home town atmosphere they get when they come to his store.

Key to success

Service is the key to success for Gibson's according to Holladay.

"We keep someone in every department at all times to wait on the customer," Holladay said.

Still Holladay said he is amazed at the growth on South Main and the county as a whole.

"I think it surprised everyone, and if it had not have, we would all have bought all the land possible and then enjoyed the benefits," he said.

Traveling on down South Main, the fast food establishments begin to jump out and catch the eyes of passersby with the family owned Taco Casa, 919 S. Main St., being one of the more successful.

Formerly a Beefers and Dell Taco, Taco Casa came when Roy Upshaw decided to locate on South Main in 1990, according to store supervisor Tony Nash.

"My father-in-law, who has been in the business for 35 years, looked at this location when it was Dell Taco and Weatherford was small," Nash said. "He just felt like it was going to be a good town that would grow. Beefers bought it from Dell Taco and they were not doing the business they wanted to do, and we approached them and made a deal and 11 years later here we are."

Nash said the company has always felt South Main was the best spot to be, even though they were initially right across the street from Taco Bell, who has since moved on down South Main, closer to the interstate.

Took time to grow

"It took us a while and it was three years before we started seeing a positive," Nash said. "Then Taco Bell bought some

See BUSINESSES on Page 11

Secret family held recipes and service with a smile have helped Taco Casa prosper after 11 years in business.